

January 22, 2003

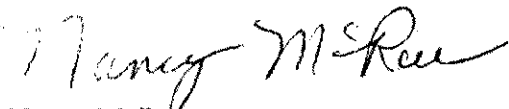
Country of Origin Labeling Program
Agriculture Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Send via fax: (202) 720-3499

This letter is to give comments on the rule making process for the Country of Origin Labeling program that was included in the 2002 Farm Bill.

It is imperative that the mandatory program be as was written in the Farm Bill. Producers and consumers alike know the importance of this program and that is why there was such a broad-based coalition at work to ensure that for meat to be labeled as produced in the United States, it must be born, raised and slaughtered in this country. As ranchers, it is important to us to produce a quality product. This is done under the most stringent health and environmental guidelines and regulations in the world. Our consumer deserves to have the opportunity to know where that meat came from. They might not always buy U.S. beef, but they deserve to know under what conditions it was produced. Is it from a country that violates human-rights laws, a country that is allowed to use restricted pesticides, a country that does not have our health standards?

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



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